



Safe Sanctuary Policy

Child, Youth and Adult Protection Plan

In order that we continue to enjoy a safe and secure environment for the children, youth and adults of our church, we at Summerfield Peace UMC have implemented the following Children, Youth and Adult Protection Plan, otherwise known as "Safe Sanctuary Policy". Please read the guidelines and complete the Volunteer Application if you are currently working with our children or youth or anticipate working with them in the future.

Members are asked to complete the Volunteer Application form if you assist in the following areas: Sunday school classes for infants through 12th grades; Children's Worship; Wednesday night Choir programming; Nursery; Confirmation Classes; Children's or Youth Band; Children's Christian Playschool; Youth Groups; Youth Retreats; Youth/Children's Lock-ins; Mission Trips with children/youth; Vacation Bible School; Family-sponsored activities; or other activity that is deemed necessary.

Updated: 10/10/2023
(To be reviewed every 2-3 years)

Safe Sanctuary

Policy and Procedures

PRODUCTION

In keeping with the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in April 1996, and the biblical teachings and beliefs of the United Methodist Church, we, the congregation of Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church, adopt the following policy and procedures so as to provide a safe sanctuary for children, youth and adults.

PURPOSE

Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church adopts the following policy and procedures to provide a safe and secure environment within the church and for any event that is connected with the ministries and operations of this church. While the primary reason for this policy is to prevent abuse and neglect of children and youth, it has been adopted to protect all who enter our doors. For the purpose of these procedures, “Youth” or “Child” shall be deemed synonymous and defined as any person less than eighteen (18) years of age or still in high school. “Adult” shall be defined as any person at least eighteen (18) years of age and out of high school.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT AND POLICY

As a Christian community of faith, Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the ministry of the Gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children, youth and adults as well as all workers with children, youth and adults. We, as a congregation, pledge our utmost to protect all who enter our doors by adopting the following procedures. The procedures are designed to prevent any type of child, youth or adult abuse, neglect or exploitation as defined by the general statutes of North Carolina. These can be specifically found in Chapters 7, 7a, 7b, and 14 of the North Carolina criminal law and procedure. Nothing in this policy or procedure is designed to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported, or confirmed violations of any North Carolina criminal laws.

PROCEDURES

While the following are the basic procedures to insure a safe physical and emotional environment, there is a need for common sense procedures in dealing with hazardous conditions.

SUPERVISION AND CONDUCT

1. All teachers and church staff who supervise directly or indirectly with children/youth must be:

- (1) At least 21 years of age, and
- (2) We prefer church members or actively involved attendees or participants for at least six months

An exception to the church membership rule is paid staff of the Children’s Christian Playschool and Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church proper, and leaders of other programs that utilize church facilities but are not otherwise affiliated with Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church (i.e. Jazzercise, Boy/Girl Scouts). If organizations that are using our facilities have their own set of regulations, the stricter of the policies must be followed.

2. All prospective workers, whether paid or volunteer, who work with the children and/or youth in any area of ministry, shall undergo appropriate nationwide screening through Trak-1. Information from this screening will be secured in the church office. The information gathered for this screening will include:
 - (1) At least three references
 - (2) Signed authorization for the background check
 - (3) Compliance of a repeat background check and file review as deemed necessary

Note: The prospective worker has the right to review their file with the pastor. Any and all information gathered by the church will be kept confidential with restricted access.
3. If deemed necessary by the Pastor, references will be checked and documented. Pastor and/or the church secretary will retain all confidential reference information.
4. Any adult who has been convicted of any crime involving a child or youth will not be permitted to work with the children/youth.
5. For prospective workers at Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church, the current Pastor may conduct any interviews necessary in determining information relevant to the background of the applying worker. In the case of the Children's Christian Playschool, the current Playschool Director will conduct necessary interviews as described above.
6. The Pastor's Study should have a small glass window in it, as well as any other room where pastoral counseling or consultation is common. An open-door policy may also be used when necessary. Pastoral counseling is expected to be confidential in nature, but it is preferred that such sessions take place where other people are nearby even though not within hearing distance. It is recommended that individuals closed in a room together stay in the line of sight of the door.
7. "Rule of Two" – A minimum of two adults should be present at any church sponsored program or event involving youth/children.
8. "The Buddy System" – We encourage parents, teachers, and leaders of any group with children/youth under the age of 18 to make sure the children or youth always have a "buddy" who is close to their age so that no child is ever alone while in the church buildings, or while on any activity or trip.
9. Children shall not be taken from the church grounds on a church-sanctioned activity without the permission of their parents or guardians, nor without a permission slip filled out.
10. No worker shall spend unsupervised time alone with children/youth without the permission of their parent or guardians.
11. Adult to youth/child ratio is as follows: 1 adult: 12 youth; 1 adult: 4 nursery-age children; 1 adult: 4 preschool-age children; 1 adult: 5 elementary-age children.
12. **Overnight Youth Retreats or Mission Trips, especially those sponsored by the Western North Carolina Conference** - All counselors must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older. On an overnight retreat where there are both male and female youth, there must be both male and female counselors. Youth will not share a bed with an adult. A minimum of three persons shall be assigned to a room, males and females housed in separate rooms. Visitation between males and females in bedrooms is prohibited unless directly supervised in a group setting with the counselors for devotional or group discussion times.
13. Appropriate Touch – Some good rules of thumb for appropriate demonstrations of affection or physical contact would be to: never initiate a hug (unless there are other adults in the room); keep hugs brief; always be the one to end a hug; hug to the side rather than the front; and never impose our touches on the children/youth in our group. Never separate yourself from the group so that you are alone with a child/youth.

14. Insurance – The church will provide adequate insurance for their facilities in case of accident or injury to anyone participating in a church-sponsored activity.

SAFETY AND FIRST AID

1. The church will maintain two first aid kits: One in the kitchen and one in the Education building. They should be checked/stocked annually.
2. It will be at the discretion of the Pastor and/or the Education Committee to decide when volunteer workers or staff members need to receive information or attend training sessions regarding the care of and safety measures for working with the children and youth.
3. In all the rooms, fire evacuation routes will be posted, and the fire extinguishers will be professionally inspected annually.

TRAVEL

1. Any teaching or educational experience that requires travel from the church or overnight travel must have the written permission and insurance information from the parent or guardian of each child/youth, and, where necessary, the approval of the pastor. The permission/medical information file must stay with the coordinator for the entire trip.
2. The “Rule of Two Adults” must be followed with no exceptions when traveling.
3. No youth may drive on any youth activity. No youth may leave the church with any person other than a parent without parental permission.
4. Transportation Guidelines:
 - One person in the vehicle should carry a cell phone in case of an emergency. The driver should not ever use the cell phone while the vehicle is in use.
 - All passengers must wear their seatbelts at all times.
 - It is highly recommended that at least 1 person be CPR certified on every trip.
 - Traveling vehicles should stay in sight of each other.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. In the Children’s Christian Playschool, parents must inform the Director who is authorized to pick up their children. If someone other than the usual person will be picking up their child, they must arrange this beforehand with the Director.
2. It is recommended that during any church or playschool function, fifth graders and younger be with a parent or teacher at all times.
3. During any church or playschool function, sixth graders and older may be released without a parent.
4. All substitute volunteers must be on an approved list which will be maintained by the Pastor and/or church secretary.
5. When a worker is helping a child use the bathroom, the exterior bathroom doors shall be propped open.

6. It is recommended that parents or guardians remain on the church grounds while their children are in the care of the church during the Sunday school hour, unless participating in a church-sanctioned event away from the church. Emergency contact information must be on file.
7. The church doors are normally kept locked for safety reasons. Members and visitors are encouraged to enter the church through the door by the office whenever possible during office hours of 8:00am-1:00pm, Monday thru Friday. On Sundays, the doors to the education side of the church will be locked at 11:15 am. Other doors should be used to enter the church after 11:15 am.
8. Sunday greeters, ushers, other education volunteers, and all members are encouraged to increase their awareness to assist visitors and give directions in our facility whenever possible.

DURING FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES – VBS, Churchwide covered dishes, etc.

**All children under 5th grade level should remain with their parents in the Fellowship Hall or in the Youth Room during mealtime.
Please do not allow your children to roam the church.**

If your children stay with you in the Fellowship Hall, please keep them with you or monitor their whereabouts. Children should not be **on the stage** or **on the playground unsupervised**.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Suspected or reported cases of neglect or abuse (physical, sexual, or other abuse) should be reported immediately to the Pastor or the Leadership Team Chairperson. In the event that the Pastor is implicated, the chairperson of the Leadership Team must notify the chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent within 24 hours.

The Pastor or Leadership Team Chairperson to whom the incident has been reported to must immediately cause an incident report to be filled out with all available details. Report forms will be kept in the office. The District Superintendent must be notified by the next business day. It will then be the decision of the District Superintendent, Pastor, and Leadership Team Chairperson as to the appropriate action to be taken. The District Superintendent shall have final local authority in the matter.

However, in no event shall any of the above fail to report substantiated abuse or neglect to the proper law enforcement or social service agency as required by North Carolina law. Contact should be made with Guilford County Sheriff's office and the Guilford County Department of Social Services to communicate the complaint.

Any person named as an alleged offender in a complaint shall immediately be required to cease any contact with children or youth through Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church activities. The alleged offender may resume activities with children/youth at such time as the District Superintendent, Senior Pastor, and Staff-Parish Relations Committee shall deem it appropriate.

CONCLUSION

In all our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be "surrounded by steadfast love, established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal". (From the Congregational Pledge 2 of the UMC Baptismal Covenant II).

**Addendum to the Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children and Youth in Response to the
Jessica Lundsford Act for North Carolina, Effective 12/01/08
for Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church
Summerfield, NC**

1. We, as the church, invite all people to be a part of the worshipping community of faith. However, we must weigh the duty to protect the children and youth of the church with the right of all people to experience God's redeeming love through worship. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuary policy and in compliance with North Carolina law, a registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community should expect to have conditions placed on his/her participation.
2. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) shall be permitted to work/volunteer with minors in any church sponsored activity. N.C. Gen Stat. § 14-208. 17(a) (2008)
3. A registered sex offender shall not be in attendance at any church event where children or youth are the primary audience. These events include, but are not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School, and scouting activities.
4. If a registered sex offender does attend such an event, he/she will be told to leave, and a report will be made to the sheriff's office.
5. A registered sex offender shall not be within 300 feet of any location on the church property intended primarily for the use, care, or supervision of minors. N.C. Gen Stat. § 14-208.18(a) (2) (2008)
6. A registered sex offender shall not be in any area of the property intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors, including but not limited to, the nursery, preschool classrooms, children's Sunday School classrooms and playground. N.C. Gen Stat. § 14-208.18(a) (1) (2008)
7. While on church property, a registered sex offender must be accompanied by an unrelated, same gender adult covenant partner provided by the church.
8. A registered sex offender should identify himself/herself as a registered sex offender to the pastor or the Director of Christian Education. A registered sex offender who wishes to be part of our church community shall read and sign a Church Participation Covenant Statement. This document will also be signed by the pastor(s) and the Chairperson of the Leadership Team and be kept on file at the church.

Registered Sex Offender Church Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of Summerfield Peace United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and youth. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuary policy and in compliance with N. C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-208.17, 14-208.18, all registered sex offenders who wish to be part of our worshipping community must abide by the following procedures:

1. As a registered sex offender, I will have and abide by conditions placed on my participation in the church community.
2. While on church property, I will be accompanied by an unrelated, same-gender adult covenant partner. Providing a covenant partner will be the responsibility of the church.
3. I will not be permitted to work/volunteer with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.17 (2008)
4. I will not be in attendance at any event where children or youth are the primary audience. This includes, but is not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School, and scouting activities. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18 (a) (3) (2008) If I attend such an event, I will be told to leave, and a report will be made to the sheriff's office.
5. I will not be within 300 feet of any location intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18(a) (2) (2008)
6. I will not be in any area of the property designated for the use, care or supervision of children or youth. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18 (a)(1) (2008). These areas include, but are not limited to, the nursery, preschool classrooms, children's Sunday School classrooms and playground.

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I acknowledge receipt of the Summerfield Peace UMC Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures manual.

I have read it and understand the importance of the material in the manual.

I agree to abide by these procedures while at Summerfield Peace UMC.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____